

4
*Hardness of Heart, the certain
Mark of a Ruin'd Party :*

Open'd in Two

SERMONS,

PREACH'D ON

June the 7th and 10th, 1716.

By THOMAS BRADBURY.

NUMB. xiv. 9.

Rebel not against the Lord, neither fear the People of the Land, for they are Bread for us : Their Defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us ; fear them not.

The Second Edition.

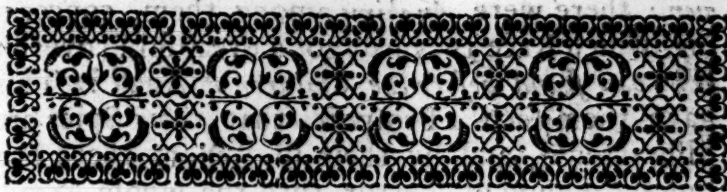
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JOSHUA XI. 20.

It was of the Lord to harden their Hearts, that they should come against Israel in Battel, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no Favour, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses.



HERE were two Things from which the *Jews* had their full Assurance of possessing the whole Land of *Canaan*: the first was a *Promise* that God would give it to the *Seed* of *Abraham his Friend*, and of *Jacob his Chosen*, and do it in remembrance of his *Covenant*; the second was a *Precept* that order'd them to make a full End of the Inhabitants, to destroy them utterly, and not leave any of them alive: and this is what you find often repeated, with a Concern equal to the Importance of so great a Charge.

Now against both these, there were two Objections: one was supply'd by the Numbers and Strength of those People whom they were to

conquer; seven Nations greater and mightier than themselves, Cities fenc'd and wall'd up to the Heavens: there were *Anakims* among them, concerning which Race they had got a dreadful Proverb; *Who can stand before the Children of Anak?* This gave them such a Prospect, that their Spies are dishearten'd, and by their ill Report there is a quick diffusion of Terror thro the whole Army, that they dare not go up, but would needs appoint to themselves a Captain, and return to Egypt. That was a Generation that err'd in their Hearts, and God swore in his Wrath that they should not enter into his Rest; and therefore when they are wore out, lest there should be an Inheritance of Cowardice, *Moses* and *Joshua* are often in the use of proper Arguments with them, not to be afraid of the populous and mighty Countries they went into, but only well remember the Lord their God, how he brought their Fathers out of Egypt, how he skreen'd them at the Red Sea, how he fed them in the Wilderness with a liberal Hand, and had already begun to put the Fear and the Dread of them, on all the Nations with whom they were to contend in Battel. These were Considerations with which he supported his own Promise, and gave an assistance to their Faith; and with a hearty regard to these they make their Seizure: for they got not the Land in Possession by their own Sword, neither did their own Arm save them; but his right Hand, and his Arm, and the Light of his Countenance, because he had a favour to them.

Psal. xliv.
3.

But then, another Objection lay against the Command he had given them, utterly to destroy the People whom they were to conquer. Indeed the Reason of this was taken from the danger there would be in slackening the Course of Justice, that the Jews would learn of their ways,
and



To the Right Honourable

D A V I D

Earl of *Buchan*, Viscount *Auchterhouse*,
Lord *Cardross* and *Glendovachie*, One
of the Lords Commissioners of
Police, and Lord Lieutenant of the
Counties of *Stirling* and *Clackmannan*.

MY LORD!



HE great Strokes of a Divine
Hand that are to be seen in King
GEORGE's Accession to the
Throne; the Wisdom and Clemency
that have fill'd all his Administration; the Glo-
ries that have reviv'd upon our Laws, and
Trade, and Credit; and our long Prospect of
being secure in all that's dear to us, by his nu-
merous Family; have render'd the late Rebel-
lion very ungrateful and foolish: That there
are amongst us a People, who will not know
the things that belong to their Peace. But
that which thickens the Horror of every honest
Man, in looking back upon what is done, is, That
that it was carry'd on with a Noise for the
Church,

The Dedication.

Church, and a Disclaim of Religion; which opens to the World a Scene of the vilest Absurdities, that those two, which God had join'd together, are now become quite different Things. Men are transported with a Word, in such a neglect of what it always us'd to mean, that they avow the Church is not safe, till Popery takes the Throne; till Profaneness and Perjury are happy enough to bring it in; till Plunder and Violence rage in our Streets; and the Liberties, that have been seal'd with the Blood of our Fathers, are quite drown'd in our own. Your Lordship has been a Witness both to the Abominations of the Cause, and the Resentments of a jealous God. I have endeavour'd to make the best use of the worst Temper that ever could possess an Enemy: the Insolence that grows under all Disappointments, is a plain Direction to our Duty, and comes in among the Arguments of our Hope. Your Lordship's known Care to assist these Improvements of what the Hand of God has wrought among us, your distinguish'd Affection to his Majesty's Person and Government, and the Influence that you have always directed to the promoting of pure and undefil'd Religion, have made me, with profound Esteem,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most Obedient,
and most Faithful Servant,

Thomas Bradbury.

and that would prove a Snare to them, and by running into their Superstition they would at last sink down into their Calamities: These were cautionary Rules; but would it not appear strange that the Servants of a Holy and Gracious God, in whom all the Families of the Earth should be Blessed, must take Possession of a Country that belong'd to others, with all the Acts of universal and popular Cruelty? 'Tis an odd Argument, that Nations are to be destroyed because they may do harm; and therefore to preserve every stroke of War in a full Reputation, God leaves the Canaanites to a Stupidity and Wickedness that push'd them to their own Ruin. If the Jews had no Command from Heaven, no Reason from the prospect of future Dangers to make a full End of them; yet here was a present necessity, that they could not do otherwise than consume a People who run the Risque of all by several Battels. The Gibeonites indeed fell in with other Measures, and got their Lives by pretending to have heard of the Marches of Israel, and the Name of their God; and 'tis a wonder that their Example was not follow'd by all the rest. It might have brought the Jews into a Snare, had other Nations taken the same way. If they spar'd them, it was in the Face of a Divine Order; had they cut them off upon their Submission, all those parts of the World would have rung with their Barbarity: and therefore says my Text, *It was of the Lord to harden their Hearts, that they should come against Israel in Battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no Favour, but that he might destroy them as the Lord had commanded Moses.* Where you observe, the fatal Stupidity and Insolence of this wretched People are consider'd as a Judgment upon them: There is the Hand of

God to be seen in it, he had determin'd their Ruin; and as a Means of leaving them to this, *it was of the Lord to harden their Hearts.*

Now the Story of the Jews and their Enemies in Egypt and Canaan stands as a publick Rule of Providence. It is *in this manner* that God's People are to be deliver'd: 'Tis thus that every Weapon form'd against them is to miscarry; he that harden'd the Heart of Pharaoh and his Host that he might *get himself a glorious Name*; he that suffer'd the Canaanites to fret and toil with an implacable Malice, on purpose to make them fall, will in our day take care that *the Wrath of Man shall praise him, and the remainder of that Wrath will be restrain.* There are Three things that I will inquire into,

I. How it is *of the Lord* to harden their Hearts.

II. What are the Effects of this Hardness, or how we may discern the marks of Ruin upon a People or Party.

III. That 'tis *a righteous Thing with God*, thus to deal with the Enemies of his Interest.

I. When we read that God hardens the Hearts of Men, it is indeed to be understood with a Glory to his Sovereign Power. Thus the Apostle uses the Expression, and he does it upon a famous Case in this History; *For the Scripture says unto Pharaoh, Even for this purpose have I rais'd thee up, that I might shew my Power in thee, and that my Name might be declared throughout all the Earth.* And from that Instance, he concludes in a general Proposition, that *therefore he has Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardens.* But then no Sense of this Phrase must be admitted, that leaves any stain upon his Holiness;

Rom. ix.
27.

Ver. 28.

liness; for he is a *God of Truth*, and without Iniquity, the *Author of every good and perfect Gift*: what comes from him is pure and undefiled, like its Parent, a futable Offspring to the *Father of Lights*. You may observe these four Particulars under this Head; That when he is said to harden the Hearts of Men,

(1.) It is not by the Infusion of wicked Principles. But

(2.) He leaves them to their own Corruptions. And

(3.) He calls in the Restraints of Conviction and Providence. Tho,

(4.) This is here said only of their Temporal Ruin, and does not immediately belong to the Judgment of another World.

(1.) *Far be it from the Almighty to pervert Justice*. Tho he is said here to harden the Hearts of those *Canaanites*, yet it was not by putting evil Principles into them: There was no need of that, when the measure of their Iniquity was full before. Let no man say when he is tempted, that he *Jam. i. 13,* is tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted to Evil,¹⁴ neither tempteth he any Man: but every Man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own Lusts, and enticed. A Sinner himself is the Original of his own Corruption and Misery; for out of the Heart of Man proceed those Evil Thoughts, that grow into all the Immoralities of Life, and drown Men in Destruction and Perdition. The first Defence that ever a Sinner made, was by laying the blame upon Providence; *The Woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave unto me, and I did eat*: and the Parable shows us how ready human Nature is to carry this Plea as far as ever it will go; *Lord, I knew thou wast an hard Master*. But as it was over-rul'd at first, it will be so for ever; for as the Apostle says, God is
not

not unrighteous who takes Vengeance, for how shall he then judg the World?

(2.) He might be said to harden their Hearts when he leaves them to their own Corruptions: Thus it is express'd in another place, Israel
 Psal. lxxxi. *would have none of me, therefore I gave them up to*
 12. *their own Lusts, to walk after their own Counsels.*
 And as this is a proper Vengeance upon those who have despised the Offers of his Grace, so there may be a Process of the like nature against the very Heathen; for 'tis said of them, that
 Rom. i. *as they lik'd not to retain God in their Knowledge,*
 28. *so he gave them up to vile Affections, and to a reprobate Mind, to do things that are not convenient.*
 There is Corruption enough within, that if it is not heal'd will prove fatal in the End, and if it is not restrain'd will be rampant in this
 1 Tim. v. *World; for some Mens Sins go beforehand to Judg-*
 24. *ment, and some Mens they follow after.* God has ways of managing Sinners, and keeping in their Wickedness, that do not amount to a Conversion: as he says to *Abimelech, I withheld thee from sinning against me.* Now it is the reverse to this, when he pronounceth a Sentence of Impenitency upon those whom he has called in vain; *Let him that is filthy, be filthy still, and him that is unrighteous, be unrighteous still.*

(3.) He may withdraw from them the Restraints of Conviction and Providence, take off the Guards of Fear and Shame; that they shall *declare their Sin as Sodom, and the shew of their Countenance witness against them:* Thus he threatens to *Ephraim, They are joined to Idols, let them alone,* give them the full swing of their Folly, till Iniquity comes to be their Ruin. He tells the *Jews* what he would do in order to reclaim them, that he will *hedg up their way with Thorns, that they shall not overtake their Lovers:* and it is not
 the

the least of the Mercies we ought to praise him for, that he denies us the Opportunity of being so vile as a furious Nature would make us. Besides this, he leaves upon the Conscience an inward Awe, that either the Fear of Man, or the Dread of Hell, shall keep them in a sort of Decency who have no Taste of Almighty Grace. Now when these are all gone, *it is of the Lord to harden such Peoples Hearts, they are under a judicial Blow, he hath hid their Eyes from Understanding, and therefore shall not exalt them.* Job xvii. 4.

This is a Judgment that hath given many a good Man a Dread at the tenderest Part: O Lord, *do not cause us to err from thy Ways, do not harden our Hearts from thy Fear.* Of some it is said, *that he gave them up to a Spirit of Slumber, to a Heart that cannot repent.* The Idolaters had a Numbness upon all the Faculties of Reason, a deceived Heart has turn'd them aside, that they can't say, *Is there not a Lye in my right Hand?* And so it is with those who are in a publick Quarrel with the Interest and People of God; they are lost to all the sober ways of Thinking. Reflection, Temper, Enquiry, and Argument are Things out of their Reach, they go tumbling and rolling on till they get into the Pit, from whence there can be no Redemption: *All Psal. xiv. 4. the Workers of Iniquity have no Knowledge, who eat up God's People as they eat Bread, and do not call upon the Lord.* But,

(4.) You may here observe, that the Accounts in my Text are confin'd to the temporal Calamities of these Nations: we are not told how it is like to be with them in another State, when the Judg of all the Earth gives the grand Decision, and closes their Fate for ever. No; the History before us reaches no farther than 'to the Ruin of their Country, or rather their own Exclusion

clusion from it; their Hardness of Heart, that came upon them, was from the Lord, that *Israel* might *show them no Favour, but utterly destroy them*: and therefore those Objections that are laid against the Phrase, when it signifies a Disposition to eternal Ruin, have nothing to do here. We are told in this Book by what means the *Jews* came to be possess'd of a Country, where their Fathers *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* dwelt in Tabernacles; how it was worthy of God to give them a Command about the utter Destruction of the *Canaanites*, and how it was a thing of Reputation in them to do it, because these Nations came out against them in Battle, and so cut off themselves from all Share in the Clemency of their Conquerors.

II. How did this Hardness appear, or what are those things that we are to look upon as the *Marks* of a People whom God hath condemn'd, and whom Men will destroy? There are great Inquiries *when* the End of these things will be; and tho some Persons pretend to *tell us how long*, yet the Reverend Veil that lies upon all Futurity, is an Argument that there are *Times and Seasons which the Father hath reserv'd in his own power*. But the search is much easier into the *Signs of the Times*: We can tell from the Days of old, and the Years of many Generations, what the Course of such and such Actions will be, whither a Set of Vices and Corruptions have always carry'd a People: And 'tis a thing to be learnt from other Histories as well as this, that such a Hardness of Heart, as the *Canaanites* had, will end just in the way as theirs did. Now this appear'd upon them.

1. In a general Impression of Fear; and yet,
2. In a prodigious Stupidity under the Divine Judgments.
3. In

3. In all manner of Insolence and Provocation to their Conquerors.

4. In barbarous Cruelties among themselves.

5. In scandalous Debaucheries.

6. In deluding Superstitions. And,

7. In notorious Profaneness. Tho some of these are contrary to one another, and we should think them inconsistent; yet 'tis no strange thing for Sinners who are struck with Vengeance, and when Conscience is too heavy for it self, cannot bear its own weight, to run into all Extremes: from being dissolv'd in Fear, they immediately swell into Arrogance; from trembling without Danger, they will fight without Security. There was this fatal Variety in the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, that brought on the Spoil of their Country, and the Effusion of their Blood; and where-ever you find it so with any other People, you may look upon them as bearing the Marks of Ruin: *their Defence is departed from them*, they become an Object of Contempt to every one, whose Faith can behold a Kingdom in Heaven, and can read a Providence in the Earth. In the Title to the 36th Psalm, *David* calls himself *the Servant of the Lord*, and perhaps he takes that Character there with a regard to the different one he hath given us of the Wicked; *That there is no Fear of God before his Eyes, the Words of his Mouth are Iniquity and Deceit, he hath left off to be wise, and to do good, he deviseth Mischief upon his Bed, he sets himself in a way that is not good, he abhors not evil.* And all this while there are upon him the strong Symptoms of a declining Creature; such a Method as this can never hold: *he flatters himself in his own-eyes, till his Iniquity be found to be hateful.* And thus it is upon any Interest or Body of People; the Religion which they despise, teacheth others to despise

A Thanksgiving Sermon

despise them; there's little need for our Hearts to envy such Sinners, if we are in the fear of God all the day long. As Job saith, *I saw the Foolish take root, but suddenly I cursed his Habitation.* I shall consider those Heads apart which I now gave you, not only as they are collected from the Accounts we have of the People mention'd in my Text, but as they agree to those Sinners in all Ages whom God suffers to harden themselves, that others may destroy them.

1. One Instance of God's Hand upon the *Canaanites*, was diffusing among them a general Fear, when *Israel* came to take possession of their Country. Indeed it seems a force upon the Word, to bring in this as a part of the Hardness that had seiz'd them, it looks rather like the want of it; as if they had too little Stupidity, and were soften'd beneath a Temper for Duty or Danger. But as I observ'd before, tho the Measures that Sinners take are very different, yet it is all the Result of one Impression, that makes them either dejected or desperate. While their Sorrow keeps cool, they are confounded in themselves; and when Luxury hath fir'd it, they'll venture at all: and therefore we find those Dispositions mention'd together, that we might think could never meet in one Person; *They eat up God's People as Bread, they call not upon the Lord; they despise the Counsel of the Poor, because the Lord is his Refuge.* From such Accounts as these we should take them to be the intrepid part of the World, unmov'd with any Danger; and yet we are told, *they were in fear where no Fear was, because God is in the Generation of the Righteous.*

Psal. xiv.
4, 5.

Ver. 6.

Thus we find it was among the *Canaanites*, they had all Fear where it could do them no Good, and they had none when it might have been

been of service. As soon as the Spies came to Rahab's House, she tells them, *that the Inhabitants of the Land did melt, because of the Children of Israel.* Now this was an Act of Faith in her, that *she receiv'd the Messengers, and hid them, and sent them away in peace.* And it had an useful Effect in the Gibeonites, it put them upon taking proper Methods for their own Security; and that elaborate Fraud with which they carry'd their Point, is what they account for from the general Fear that run thro the Country: they *heard that the Lord had commanded Moses to slay all the Inhabitants of the Land;* and therefore they disguis'd their own Case, and stole a Protection by Craft, that they never could have had by War. Now it is a wonder that all the rest did not do so too; they had the same Terrors, but they took pains to hide them, and put on a Boldness which they did not really feel within them. This *Moses* foretold in his Song on the Banks of the *Red-Sea*, that the Plunge of the *Egyptians*, their sinking *as Lead in the mighty Waters*, would be carry'd abroad in the Sounds of Fame, and wound where-ever it reach'd. *The People shall hear and be afraid, and Sorrow shall take hold on the Inhabitants of Palestine; the Dukes of Edom shall be amaz'd; the mighty Men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the Inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away: Fear and Dread shall fall on them, by the Greatness of thine Arm, they shall be as still as a Stone, till thy People pass over, O Lord, till the People pass over which thou hast purchas'd.* And tho there was an Interruption above forty Years to the quickening of this Prophecy, yet it came according to the time of Life. When they sent out the Spies, and they return'd with a wicked Story, then *Israel* were guilty of a Cowardice, that kept them one

Heb.xi.31.

A Thanksgiving-Sermon

Year longer out of the good Land ; but when God would bring them into it, then the Temper is inverted, they will *not be slack to go and possess it*, and the People whom their Fathers had conceiv'd a Dread of, were but Meat unto them.

It is very easy to fix the Application of this Character ; for notwithstanding all the noisy Rage, and the trifling paultry ways of rejoicing the Enemies of our Country have, 'tis very plain they have lost their Cause by their Cowardice. We come indeed to contemplate and admire the Hand of God in all this matter ; but when we talk of things as they lie open to the Eyes of Men, we may say they had fairer Opportunities of embroiling us. There was a time for them to have slid into the Kingdom, without the Tumult and Fright of an Invasion ; it is what they design'd themselves, but in short they had no Hearts to push it. What a Hush possess'd the whole Faction, when God made room for his present Majesty ? On such a Turn as that, we expected that Scandal upon our Throne, that Misery upon the Nation, that had been so often threatned : but the Great God did by them, as he did by the *Egyptians* ; he suffer'd them to persecute, to rage, and after every Fright to harden again, *Whilst Israel was there*, that his Miracles might have their full Course ; but they are quite confounded when *Israel* is to go, *not a Dog shall move his Tongue*. And to preserve the historical Similitude a little further, as there was such a Stillness during the whole time of the King's Stay beyond Sea, so in a few Months after his Arrival they begun to be uneasy, according to the manner of the *Egyptians*, who *repented they had let the People go*. Is it not strange, that in a Country where *every Family had one dead*, which made them drive out the

the Children of Israel with haste, that about three days after they should have forgot the Hand of God that had made such a Distribution of Vengeance among them all? Just in this way have we been perplex'd by the rallying of a Party that seem'd to be wholly confounded. They are plainly in the Egyptian Humour; perhaps it may be for an Egyptian Fate: For thus runs the Promise; *O my People, that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian, he shall lift up his Staff against thee after the manner of Egypt: i. e. Thou shalt never have an end of thy Dangers whilst these People continue; they'll keep up a perpetual Round, as Pharaoh did, of being humbled, and being harden'd: but yet a very little while and the Indignation shall cease, and mine Anger in their Destruction, and the Lord of Hosts shall stir up a Scourge for him, according to the Slaughter of Midian at the Rock of Oreb; and as his Rod was upon the Sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.*

There are Ways that Providence hath of returning them to their own Confusion, and making Non-Resistance, which hath been their Boast, to be their Doom. We have another Promise upon the Ground of the same Story, as if it stood for a Pattern to them in future Ages; *According to the Days of thy coming out of the Land of Egypt, will I show to him marvellous Works.* And what was the Consequence of this? the same that it was in the old Deliverance: for as there is no teaching a People whom God hath harden'd, there's no reviving those whom he hath sunk. With this triumphant Glory shall his Servants go on; *The Nation shall see and be confounded at their Might, they shall lay their Hands upon their Mouths, their Ears shall be deaf, they shall lick the Dust like a Serpent, they shall move out*

A Thanksgiving-Sermon

out of their Holes like Worms of the Earth, they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee.

2. Another Mark of Ruin upon the *Canaanites*, and which will bear the same Interpretation in the Case of all those that have it, is a prodigious *Stupidity* under the Divine Judgments. They have, as I said before, a general Fear, and it never totally leaves them, but they drown it with Riot, or they divert it with Noise: They get as far as they can out of the way of feeling themselves. What a vast number of Kings do we read of that the *Jews* destroy'd; some in the time of *Moses*, and a great many more after *Joshua* had receiv'd his Charge! and yet this was no warning to the rest. They saw that a conquering Vengeance was coming against them; which way soever the Sword of *Israel* turn'd it self, it always prosper'd: and yet they go on to sollicite their own Ruin; they neither us'd the Methods of Submission, nor of Flight. One would think it was with them always in their Politicks, as it was once in the Field, that *they had no power to flee either this way or that way*. A right Fear of Danger is a most useful Principle, and stands in opposition to the *Rage and Confidence of Fools*; but the Fear that falls upon Men as a Judgment, is like the *Sorrow of this World, that worketh Death*: such a one there was in *Nabal*, his Heart sunk within him, and became as a Stone.

And a great deal of this we have in our Nation. If People would think at all when the Judgments of the Lord are abroad in the Earth, the *Inhabitants of the World would learn Righteousness*. But, as the same Prophet tells us, *Let Favour be shown to the Wicked, yet will he not learn Righteousness; in the Land of Uprightness will he deal unjustly,*

Isa. xxvi. 9,
10, 11.

justly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord: for, saith he, when thy Hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see, and be ashamed for their Envy at thy People; yea, the Fire of thine Enemies shall devour them. They take what pains they can to keep the Conviction from piercing into them; and as it is one part of their Misery, that here it does not, so it is a greater and a worse part, that hereafter it shall. There is a time coming on, when all the Tendernefs of Conscience will be reviv'd, not as a Principle of Religion and Duty, but as a Mark, at which the Arrows of Vengeance are aim'd. The Prophet *Jeremy* represents the Nation in a wretched way, when they willingly give up the Empire and Use of their own Reason, and hir'd it out to others; *A woful and horrible thing is committed in Jer. v. 30, the Land, the Prophets prophesied falsely, the Priests³¹ bear Rule by their Means, and this People love to have it so.* And if this Stupidity could be eternal, then we might know the worst of it; but what will they do in the end thereof? q. d. It must not be always thus, there is a day when they shall see both that they are undone, and that it is owing to themselves, and that there is no Remedy.

One of our Errands this Day is to rehearse the righteous Acts of the Lord towards the Inhabitants of the Villages of Israel, to refresh and retouch our Joys; but we have another Design in it, and that's to encourage us for the time to come, that we may take in those Arguments to our Faith, which the Enemies refuse as Instructions to their Fear. And if we utter the Loving-kindness of the Lord, and show forth all his Praise, we must make his wonderful Works to be remembered. By the Compass that was taken in preparing the late Rebellion, by the Confidence that was us'd in

in swelling it, it is very apparent that the Enemy thought of no less than an easy Conquest; and yet they have been confounded in every Branch of the Design. When Battles were fought, our God hath given the Decision; where Numbers were gather'd, they run away with Fear and Shame: *Thou hast put them to flight, because the Lord hath despised them.* Sometimes they thought to carry their Point by an Army; and then their Generals have slept their Sleep, none of the Men of Might could find their Hands. At other times they resolv'd to push their Cause with Mobs and Riots, which hath indeed been the more successful way; but what have they done in this, besides scattering abroad domestick Injuries, and declaring themselves the publick Enemies of Mankind? And how many poor Wretches have lost their Lives in the Heat of these Tumults, sent into another World with an Oath in their Mouths? And yet you find, that neither the Stroke of War, nor that of Justice, nor those in confus'd and popular Quarrels, have brought us to easier Terms with them. They are not to be persuaded by Arguments, nor awaken'd by Dangers; and we may look upon them as a People on whom God will throw away no more Conviction. 'Tis dreadful standing in the way of that Prayer, for it will fall with a full Weight of Vengeance; the Argument upon which it hinges belongs as much to our Case, as it did to that of the Jews: *Arise,*

Psal. lxxiv.
22, 23.

O Lord, plead thine own Cause; remember how the foolish Man reproacheth thee daily, forget not the Voice of thine Enemies, the Tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.

3. 'Tis no wonder that this Stupidity under the Hand of God, brings on a foolish Insolence and Provocation to those that are above them.

Thus

Thus it was among the *Canaanites*, they were still pushing new Wars, which always ended in their own Desolation. When *Gibeon* had made Peace with *Israel*, *five Kings*, in that part of the Country, immediately came to destroy it: *Joshua* takes 'em Prisoners, puts 'em in a Cave at *Mackedah*, till he had finish'd his Victory over the People; and it is observ'd upon his Return, that *none mov'd his Tongue against the Children of Israel*: but that was not to dull the Process of Justice; no, he takes out the five Kings, orders the Captains to put their Feet upon the Necks of them, and afterwards hangs them upon five Trees, and then cast their dead Bodies into a Cave. It is a dreadful Temper indeed that People are given up to, when they appear incapable of Mercy, when it is evident that the sparing of one Rebel is but the encouraging of a hundred; it looks as if their Hearts were harden'd, when they'll be upon no Terms either with God or Man.

The Scripture hath not told us, whether the foolish and ludicrous ways of Insolence, that have obtain'd in our day, were us'd against the Armies of *Israel*. 'Tis not likely they were; for the Country being the Seat of War, and *Joshua* taking all the pains he could to close the Design in his day, we cannot suppose 'em at leisure for any of these lower Provocations. Nothing can be more contemptible than for a People, who dare not appear in a Field, to *delight in Vanity, and follow after Lyes*; to be distinguish'd by things equally impudent and ridiculous. Are these Methods ever likely to carry along with them the Blessings of the great God? *Hath he any pleasure in Fools*? That Cause must be half starv'd, when Persons are hir'd to disguise themselves, to take a Garb, and make a noise; and yet

yet these silly childish Tricks are to do no less than new-model a Kingdom. We may call to them, as the Prophet does to the Idolaters; *Remember, O ye Transgressors, and show your selves Men*: 'Tis acting beneath your Nature. Is here a Design of so much consequence, that whole Nations must be brought into the Quarrel, and shall it be carry'd on by a fantastical Mummery? These People must be far gone from all that's great and good, who can have any Dependence upon those little Shams and Fooleries, that common Sense would be asham'd of? And does it not look like God's hardening their Hearts, when he hath *soften'd* their Heads to that degree, that there's nothing too poor and ridiculous for 'em to do?

4. The *Canaanites* were guilty of barbarous Cruelties. God had told the *Jews*, that *Blood defil'd the Land*; and for the innocent Blood shed there, that Land had spew'd out its Inhabitants. Their high-wall'd Cities, their Charriots of Iron, that we read of, are Arguments that they had Wars among themselves. When the Earth was fill'd with Violence in the old World, then the End of all Flesh had come before him. And there are Hints enow, that Crimes of this nature had made up the Measure of Iniquity among the *Canaanites*; things for which *the Earth is disquieted, and which it cannot bear*. *Bowels of Mercy, and Humbleness of Mind*, are the Ornaments of our Religion; and, as the *Elect of God*, we must put them on with *Meekness and Long-suffering*: No Church, no Nation can subsist without them. But when once a want of Pity, and a delight in Mischief, comes to be the Character of a Party, they are not far from Ruin; for *he shall have Judgment without Mercy, who hath shewed no Mercy*: And it is but just it should

should be so; for if God was not a swift Witness against such as these, there would be an end of all human Nature. We have one Story that shows us to what Improvements of Cruelty they were come in the Land of *Canaan*. When the *Jews* took *Adonibezeeck*, they inflict upon him a very odd Punishment, in cutting off his *Thumbs* and *great Toes*: but to this Rarity of Justice they were directed by the Hand of God; for *three-score and ten Kings*, having their *Thumbs* and *great Toes* cut off, did daily gather their *Meat* under his *Table*. What a Curse was such a one to all his Neighbourhood? You see by this one Instance, that the People had lost the Dread of these Barbarities, because here is a mighty Conqueror among them, a Monarch of the first Figure, who is guilty of a ludicrous Inhumanity; and yet they are either impotent or indolent in taking a full Satisfaction on him.

I am sure it is with no degree of Pleasure that we look for any Parallel of this Character among our selves; 'tis but searching for the Reproach of our Country: but the Evidence is too great to be deny'd. The very Mischief that's done in our Streets, the Indecency that hath sully'd all Conversation, the Noise and Bellowings at certain times, are a plain Alarm to a publick Massacre, if they had it in the power of their Hands. The mighty Gust with which some People speak of burning Cities, and shedding Blood, and these of their nearest Acquaintance, such as never did 'em any harm; shows us that they have lost that balmy part of Humanity, that makes the World sociable. And such a Temper as this can arise from nothing but a false Religion; Men could not have a Thirst for the Ruin of those that never provok'd them, if it was not owing to an *Ulcerated*

A Thanksgiving-Sermon

Conscience, which, being corrupted it self, sends out nothing but Stench and Poison to all that are about it. Thus they do not stick at putting you out of the Synagogues; yea, the time may come, when they think that if they kill you they do God good Service. When Popery was establish'd in this Nation, in the Reign of Queen Mary, in a little while the burning of a Martyr was a popular Entertainment. Those Spectacles that ought to fill the Mind with Horror, grew so familiar, that History tells us how Women and Children were taught to lay aside all the Clemency of Constitution, and join in the Shouts of the Day. And the late Attempts that have been made to get that Religion in among us again, was with the same Temper: burning the Houses of Worship that belong'd to those who were never in Arms against them, and had given 'em no particular Affront, did their Cause no good, and could not be of Service any further than in gratifying a Spirit that proceeds from him who comes to kill and to destroy. But are these the Tokens of God's Favour to a Cause? What! hath he chang'd his Nature? He us'd to have *no Fellowship with Workers of Iniquity*. We need not run our Argument against them so high as the Cries of the Church, the Mournings of his Turtle-Dove; for the very *Creation groans together* to be deliver'd from such a Load of Wickedness.

5. We read of those scandalous *Debaucheries* which were forbid to the *Jews*, as the Practice of the People that went before them. The Country being pleasant and fruitful, the Inhabitants advanc'd into all the Measures of Luxury. When *Abraham* and *Isaac* liv'd in those Parts, there was something so gross among 'em, that they concluded, *Surely the Fear of the Lord is not in the Place.*

Place. And yet the Iniquity of the *Amorites* was not then full; but about the time that the *Jews* went to dispossess them, we may suppose that they had compleated their Vileness.

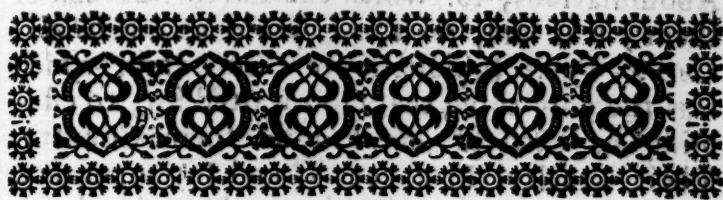
I'm sensible that this can scarce be call'd a Distinction among us, *All Flesh hath corrupted their way*; but there's one thing lies open enough to any one's Observation, That the very Design, upon which so many unhappy People have work'd out their own Ruin, was laid and promoted in Debauchery: Persons that were seldom sober pretend to have their Consciences under great Impressions about the Divine Right of Kings. Here's a Man sets up for a Casuist about the Disposal of a Throne, who is a Brute in all the rest of his Conversation: and what can this end in, especially if you join to it another Character, that was very notorious among the *Canaanites*? and that is,

6. A deluding Superstition. That was a Country famous for Sorcery, Witchcraft, and all those Abominations; they had fill'd the Land with their Groves and Altars, and had carried the frenzical Delusion so far, as to *offer their Sons and Daughters in the Fire to Moloch*. One would think indeed, that People who are within the Description that I have given you of Cruelty and Riot, should never trouble their Heads about Religion; but it is plain they make the greatest Noise with it. There is a certain Zeal for the Church that Satan will never hinder, his Kingdom is more promoted by that, than it is by downright Atheism. The *perilous Times of the last Days* are describ'd in this, that *Men shall be Lovers of their own selves, Covetous, Proud, Boasters, Blasphemers, Disobedient to Parents, Unthankful, Unholy, without natural Affection, Truce-Breakers, false Accusers, Incontinent, fierce Despisers of those*

those that are good ; Traytors, Heady, High-minded, Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God : and yet of these it is said, They have a Form of Godliness, but they deny the Power of it.

7. There was among the *Canaanites* a notorious *Profaneness*, a Contempt of the Lord God of *Israel*, and therefore he pleaded his own Cause, and brought his Vengeance down upon the Crime that struck immediately at his Throne : and it is to be expected that he will have a Jealousy for his Name, and *not hold him guiltless that dares to take it vain.* Shall his Cause be promoted by swearing either with Vanity or with Falshood ? Shall an open Enemy to his Truth, and a Despiser of his Holiness, be a Champion for his *Anointed* ? There is something indeed in the very Sound of Blasphemy that will make a good Man tremble, but he ought to have no great Dread of an Interest that is thus supported. In the Civil Wars of this Kingdom a small Party were going to ingage with twice their Number : and when some of them began to show a little Fear at the Volley of Oaths that came from the Enemy, the commanding Officer bid his Soldiers take Courage ; for, says he, *We fight the Cause of that God whom they blaspheme :* and the Battle ended in the way that most of them then did. I cannot now pretend to inquire into the Grounds of this awful Justice, why God should leave his Enemies so devoid of all Shame, and Fear, and Sobriety, when he prepares them for Ruin : That must be adjourn'd to the next Lord's Day, which is their Anniversary of their *Rejoicing IN a THING OF NOUGHT.*

JOSHUA



JOSHUA XI. 20.

For it was of the Lord to harden their Hearts, that they should come against Israel in Battel, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no Favour, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses.

III.



Am now to enter into the Justice of this Proceeding, and show you that it is a righteous thing with God thus to harden and confound the Enemies of his Interest in the World :

Evil Men and Seducers shall wax worse and worse, 2 Tim. iii. deceiving, and being deceiv'd. This is the Model 13. of Vengeance for Babylon the Great, a mighty Security and Presumption is to lead on their Fall: How much she hath glorify'd her self, and Rev. xviii. liv'd deliciously, so much Torment and Sorrow give 7. 8. her; for she saith in her Heart, I sit a Queen, and am no Widow, and shall see no Sorrow: Therefore shall her Plagues come in one day, Death, and Mourning, and Famine, and she shall be utterly burnt with Fire; for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her.

her. The *Canaanites* had been guilty of rank Abominations, for which the Earth was sick of them; it is said, *the Land spew'd up her Inhabitants*: Their Iniquities were now full, which was the only thing that God waited for, to establish the Seed of *Abraham* in their Country. Their Cruelty, Profaneness, and Intemperance, made them a Load to the Places where they liv'd, and 'twas but just with God to deny them a political Turn of Thought; that notwithstanding all their Boast of a supernatural Knowledg, they should not have the common Fetches of Reason for their own Security: *He harden'd their Hearts*, that is, made them stupid to the Methods that might have preserv'd them, and wilful upon those that actually destroy'd them. Persuasion could not reach them, Terror did not help them; they had the Agonies of Fear without the Benefits, and took all the ways to hurry on Calamity in a Deluge. Without such a Temper as this, the *Jews* could not have proceeded in so great a Reputation as attended all their Wars: as *Moses* observes, he had sent to *Sihon* with Words of Peace, to let *Israel* pass by him; but he would not do it, for *the Lord thy God harden'd his Spirit, and made his Heart obstinate, to deliver him into thine Hand, as appears this Day.* Their Impenitency and Misery stand as a Warning to us, and direct us into the proper Views of that Tribulation, that God will recompense to those that trouble his People. They that run into the Crime of these *Canaanites* shall have their Fate, if their Hearts are harden'd to come out against *Israel* to Battel; it is that they may destroy them utterly, and shew them no favour.

Deut. ii. 30.

Now under this Head I must inquire what there is in the Enemies of our Religion and Country, that provokes the God of the Spirits

of all Flesh to leave them under so great an Infatuation : why should their *Conscience be fear'd*, and they be *past feeling*, and not only in a personal but a political way *commit Iniquity with Greediness*? In answer to this, I shall not only lay before you the Crimes of the Men, but the very Spirit of their Cause. I will not consider their Sins under an individual Character, as they are done in a private way, but take a Survey of that Design upon which they inflame themselves, and embroil the World : for the Spirit speaks expressly of a certain Party in the latter Times, who shall depart from the Truth, giving heed to seducing Spirits, and the Doctrine of Devils ; speaking Lyes in Hypocrisy, having their Consciences fear'd with a hot Iron. And we need not look very far for a Church to which these Marks belong, if we do but read the next words ; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from Meats, which God hath created to be receiv'd with Thanksgiving of them that believe and know the Truth. That these are Notions they would drive into a Kingdom, with no other Argument than Ecclesiastical Authority, is notorious enough ; and their doing this with a *fear'd Conscience*, hath in it a Mixture of Crime and of Judgment. They love to be *past feeling*, and God suffers them to be so ; any Tenderness within would spoil their Cause, and the Temper that prepares them for Action marks them out for Ruin. We may, without any Excess of Passion say, that the very End they aim at is a Provocation of the God with whom we have to do.

1. As they have inverted the great Design of Christianity, which was to establish Christ Jesus as the *Head over all things to the Church*.

2. As they have abus'd and profan'd that Holy Spirit, by whom Believers are *seal'd unto the Day of Redemption.*

3. As they have disparag'd the great Work for which the Son of God came down into the World, to make *Peace on Earth, and show a good Will towards Men.*

4. As they have polluted the *Beauties of Holiness*, and quite transform'd all the Parts of Divine Worship.

5. As they have injur'd those People who are zealous for the *Faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints.*

6. As they have discourag'd all practical Religion, and taken off from the Minds of Men the awful Impressions of Eternity.

7. As they have done all this under a Profession of Zeal for the Church, by which the Name of God is grown contemptible. These are Crimes that particular Persons are guilty of, and they never fail to bring a Hardness upon the Heart, because it is *doing despite unto the Spirit of Grace.* But I am now to consider them as the very Soul of that Cause that hath troubled our *Israel.*

1. It is but just with God to give up those to a fatal Impenitency, who are acting in a plain Opposition to the great Design of Christianity, which was to establish Christ Jesus as the *Head over all things unto the Church.* This was the dear Project that God had in view, that all Men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father; and it is now so essential to Religion, that we are told, that he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father who hath sent him. This is the main Result of that Scheme, that Counsel of Peace between them both, that he should build the Temple, and bear the Glory, and sit and rule as a Priest

Priest upon his Throne. It was a Reward to the profuse Charge of Blood that he had been at; when he drunk of the Brook that ran in the way, for this cause he should lift up his Head on high. This was the chief part of the Joy set before him; when he endur'd the Cross, he could despise the Shame of suffering for a Church, as his Eyes were intent upon a supreme Office in it: for this did God raise him again by his own right Hand, and set him in the Throne of the Majesty on high, not only to be seen of Angels, to be made better than they, as he had by Inheritance obtain'd a more excellent Name; but his Dignity reacheth down to this lower World, he is the Head over all things Eph. i. 23. unto his Church, which is his Body, the Fulness of him that fills all in all.

And therefore any Set of People, any Train of Notions, that do not fall in with this, are guilty of the highest Arrogance; they aim at no less than to rife the Decrees of the Father, and to defraud the Merit of the Son; to rob the one of his Design, and the other of his Demand: *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent* Psal. cx. it; thou art a Priest for ever, after the Order of 4, 5, 6. Melchisedek. And in maintenance of this Constitution, the Lord, at thy right hand, shall strike thro Kings in the day of his Wrath, he shall judg among the Heathen; he shall fill the Places with dead Bodies, he shall wound the Heads over many Countries. 'Tis a Resolution that he will not part with, *I have sworn by my self, the Word* Isa. xlv. is gone out of my Mouth in Righteousness, and shall 23, 24. not return; unto me every Knee shall bow, and every Tongue shall swear: Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength, even to him shall Men come, and all that are incens'd against him shall be asham'd. As there must be a Hardness before People can enter into a Plot of this

nature, so God is just, by loading the Sin with more of it self, and closing up the Eyes that will not open, that they who refuse to see shall be *made blind*. Now where do we find the dangerous Characters that I have mention'd, so much as in the *Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition*? He hath a Name that was given to none but *Judas*, who had it for betraying his Master, as the other hath for usurping upon his Principal.

Rom. xiv.
10, 11.

The Authority of Christ over his Church lies in giving them Laws, and being the only Sovereign of the Conscience. Thus did the Apostle understand that Passage out of the Prophet that I have lately quoted, as a Prohibition to an imposing Humour: *Why dost thou judg thy Brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every Knee shall bow to me, and every Tongue shall confess to God*. All Intrusion of human Authority here, is Treason against his Throne; and to this the Martyrs in several Ages have witness'd a good Confession, that which they suffer'd for was refusing to bear the *Mark of the Beast*. They had already receiv'd the *Seal of God in their Foreheads*, they had their *Father's Name* there, and of such it is said, that *they are not defil'd with Women; i. e. they fell in with none of that Superstition* which is usually describ'd in sensual Terms, for *they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes*; they lay down their Lives not only for the *Word of God*, but for the *Testimony of Jesus*,

Rev. xiv.
1, 2, 3.

And an Opposition to this Cause, my Brethren, is what hath push'd us into the late Calamities. 'Tis not merely who shall reign in one Kingdom, but who shall govern the Church of the living God. We know who it is that arrogates to himself all the Peculiars of a Mediator, by claiming the *Key of David, opening when*

with none can shut, and shutting when none can open; making a Sentence of Excommunication or Absolution irresistible both in Earth and Heaven. So that if the Pharisee upon this Presumption should have ask'd the Question, as he did to our Saviour, *Who can forgive Sins but God only?* he must not have been treated as a Disputant, but a Heretick, and had his Answer by an Inquisition rather than a Miracle. We know who it is that gives Laws about Religion, that have no Foundation in Scripture; and 'tis in maintenance of these Impositions, that Nations are involv'd in Wars. The Doctrine of Christ Jesus is the Doctrine of Peace, 'tis so in its Nature, and in its End, and in the way of its coming among Men; but Ceremonies have always swum in Blood, and must be driven in with Force and Violence. By the Plan of Scripture we find no *Advocate with the Father* but one, and that's *Jesus Christ the Righteous*. To answer which Provision, there was the Office of a High-Priest under the Law, but one Person who could enter into the Holiest of all, and that only once a Year; and as our Redeemer is capable of doing all this for us, so it is a Tribute to his Perfection and Glory, when we have that Dependence upon him: But we are told of a Swarm of Intercessors; and if they above were as ready to take the Office, as these below are to bestow it, it would turn all the Saints into Sinners, and fill Heaven with Rebellion and Folly.

But this was threaten'd, that as they receiv'd not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved, so God gave them up to strong Delusions, to believe a Lye, that they all might be damn'd, who have not pleasure in the Truth, but have pleasure in Unrighteousness. Is it any wonder that they are harden'd,

2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.

den'd, who have rifled all the Offices of a Messiah? They have confounded his Work as a *Prophet*, by teaching things that he never commanded; they have mingled the Glory of his *Priesthood*, by their Doctrine of Merit, the Juggle of Purgatory, the Confidence of Absolution, and the Intercession of departed Spirits; and they have defil'd his Dignity as a *King*, by giving his Supremacy to another, and his Worship to Graven Images. Their very Cause is a Grand Rebellion against the Empire that God hath set up, and which he hath told us shall pull down and destroy all the Opposition that is made unto it. To this Truth he expects that we bear our Testimony with Zeal and Blood; if his Providence calls us, our Lives may be a Sacrifice for him who made *his* so to us. Do not imagine that good People are engag'd in a Quarrel so low, as the settling of a *human Title*; that's always consider'd in Subordination to the *main Cause*, that we may say unto Zion, *thy God reigns*: and whenever any thing looks with the Face of

Rev. xii. 10. those Times, that *Satan the old Serpent, who deceives the World, is cast out with his Angels*, we on Earth may say with them in Heaven, *Now is come the Salvation of our God, and the Power of his Christ*.

2. They have abus'd and profan'd the Holy Spirit, who is to lead us into the way of all Truth, and by whom we must be seal'd unto the day of Redemption. When our Saviour left the World, as it was to have no more of his bodily Presence, so he design'd to make his Errand effectual by a sufficient Proxy; and in this sense tells his Disciples he would see them again, and be always with them: which Sentences are to be understood of that Comforter, who is to live and abide with them for ever. 'Tis his Work to convince

vince of Sin, of Righteousness, and Judgment; to begin the Change that's wrought upon the Soul, and to carry it on till it is heighten'd into Glory. All the Graces that we have, are Principles of his implanting; all the Duties that we do, are Works of his filling: He breathes Life into us, and breathes Life thro us into them, and sometimes thro them back again into us. He is the Author, the Spring, the Guardian, and great Soul of our Religion. As Conversion is call'd a being born of the Spirit, so Holiness is walking in the Spirit. Our Comforts, the Peace, and Joy, and Hope we have in believing, are thro the Power of the Holy Ghost; and tho these things have but a fantastical Sound to the greatest part of the World, yet they are as evident as Godliness it self: every good Man in all Ages, and all Countries, hath own'd that it was not he that lived, but Christ that lived in him. There is indeed a personal way of quenching the Spirit, which we are all of us to take care of; but beside that, the Opposition that is made to it appears to be the Distinction of a certain Cause and Party among us.

The chief Aim of their Quarrel is to pull Christ out of Heaven, and drive the Holy Ghost out of Earth, by denying the Supremacy of the One, and blaspheming the Operations of the Other. To this purpose, Discourses of Regeneration, a Change out of *Darkness into a marvellous Light*, are not only neglected, but laugh'd at. 'Tis reckon'd a Whim to talk of a Man's being born again; there are *Masters in Israel* that know none of these things: *We speak that we know, and testify that we have seen, and they receive not our Testimony*. The very Title of *Saints* is made a Word of Reproach, People understand nothing by it but a Hypocrite, or a Madman; as if the

Name

Name it self had lost its Meaning, tho it is one of the beloved Dignities of our blessed Saviour, that he is the *King of Saints*. To talk of Almighty Grace, that Power of God that carries us thro Faith unto Salvation, is but raving Nonsense; and to speak of the Spirit's Assistance in the Duty of Prayer, which we so much and so often need, is made to be Cant, Enthusiasm, and Blasphemy it self. Nor are these the little Excursions of private Persons, *Scoffers* there have been in all Ages, walking after their own Lusts; but it is the cool Doctrine, the deliberate Opinion of a numerous Party. Our Lord hath foretold us the Danger of any Boldness this way, that *whosoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that speaks against the Holy Ghost, hath Forgiveness neither in this World, nor that which is to come*. I know those Words are usually understood of a particular Sin, which closeth the Conscience in a present Impenitency, but we may also read them with a farther View, that if there is one part of Religion more Sacred than another, it is that which relates to the Operation of the Holy Spirit. And is it any wonder that they are *hardened*, whose very Principles make 'em common Enemies to him that should *soften* them? If their Cause should prevail, in the View upon which they have form'd it, 'tis to turn out that Divine Agent from the Churches, who makes the Saints what they are, and prepares 'em for what they shall be. But when the Enemy came in like a Flood, upon a Design of this nature, the Spirit of the Lord took himself to be concern'd and aggriev'd, and lift up a Standard against him.

Isa. lix. 19.

3. They have disparag'd the great Work for which the Son of God came down into the World.

World, to make peace on Earth, and show a Goodwill towards Men. Thus did the Angels sing at his Birth, and that made it glad Tidings of great Joy to all People: from hence did they who waited for the Consolation of Israel, expect the tender Mercy of their God, to be deliver'd from the Wrath of Enemies, and serve him without Fear in Righteousness and Holiness. And agreeable to an Errand so mild and easy, was the Serenity of our Saviour's Life; he never practis'd, and never taught the way of bullying Nations into the Truth, or driving them into Heaven with a Sword: This is a Cause that must prosper, not by Might, nor by Power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts; and when they lay the Topstone, the great Song and Cry of that Day will be Grace, Grace unto it: Grace in the Spring from whence it rose, Grace in the Channel or Method in which it flow'd. This is what our Lord always kept in view; and when he bids us learn of him, 'tis as he is meek and lowly in Heart. When he put on the Garb of a Sovereign, and march'd unto Jerusalem with a publick Glory, having his Way strew'd with Garments and Leaves, his Person attended with a vast Multitude, his Name sung with loud Hosanna's; yet as if he would instruct us, even then, in the nature of his Empire, he rode upon an Ass: and the Prophet that foretold this, doth it under the Character of his being meek and lowly. So, when a City of the Samaritans would not receive him, because he was going up to Jerusalem, the two Disciples, no doubt on't, consulted the Honour of their Master, by offering to call for Fire out of Heaven, as Elias did: They plead a good Precedent, and seem to act in a noble Design; but he rebukes them, saying, Ye know not what Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy

Mens Lives, but to save them. This was the great Business of Christianity, to prepare People for another World, but never to make it worse with them in this.

And therefore all coercive haling Ways are forbid to the *Servants of the Lord*, who must *not strive, but be gentle to all Men; in Meekness instructing those who oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.* Now what have they done with our Religion, who talk of deriving an Authority from Christ to turn Nations into a Wilderness? What place can Inquisitions, Massacres, and Penal Laws have in promoting a *Kingdom that is not of this World*? And shall a Cause, that is thus form'd, ever prosper? Will God forsake the dearest Work of his own Hands, the greatest thing that ever he wrought among Men? Must *Zion, the City of our Solemnities*, be a Desert? Shall the noble Frame of Salvation, that he laid in the Gospel, be all brought to Rubbish? In short, will God give up an Interest, where he hath lodg'd the very best of his Glory, and which is the brightest part of his Revenue, from the Sons of Men? No, *Jerusalem* will prove a *burdensome Stone* to all that come in Battle against it: and tho the People, who have *establish'd Zion with Blood and Cruelty*, have had long standing; yet every Age hath added to the Load of Guilt, and the time of drawing near for *their Sins to reach to Heaven, and for God to remember their Iniquities*, a Day of mighty Search, is a coming on; and with them will be found *the Blood of all the Martyrs and Prophets that have been slain on the Earth.*

Rev. xviii.
ult.

4. They have polluted the *Beauties of Holiness*, and all the Parts of Divine Worship. God hath given us Ordinances for the Conversion of Sin-
ners

ers, the perfecting of the Saints, and the edifying of the Body of Christ; we are to hear his Voice in Sermons, he is to hear ours in Prayer: we come before him with Thanksgiving, and make a joyful Noise with Psalms; we sit at his Table, and have a Fellowship with his People: and how amiable are these Tabernacles of the Lord God of Hosts! they make Earth look like Heaven. When our Saviour ascended up on high, he receiv'd these Gifts for Men, that he might continue to them Pastors and Teachers; it was a Scheme laid for the Divine Presence, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

But these are the very things that the Enemies of our Religion hate, they have thrown away the *Glory from Israel*. Sermons or Orationations are no more than admiring the Relicks of a dead Saint, and filling the Bags of a living Sinner; very little better than the sorry Methods that the Jews had learnt of the Heathens, when they sought unto Wizards, that peep and muster, seeking for the Living unto the Dead. What is this to that use of the Ministry that the Apostle mentions? *Who renounc'd the hidden things of Dishonesty, and by Manifestation of the Truth commended himself to every Man's Conscience in the sight of God: Proclaiming Repentance and Remission of Sins, thro the Name of Jesus, warning every Man, and teaching every Man, that he might present every Man perfect in Christ.* A sort of Preaching there is, where Justification by Faith is never mention'd; where the Death of Christ is consider'd rather as a Tragedy, than as an Atonement; where the Imputation of what he hath done, is not brought in but with Contempt; where a frightened Conscience is left to seek for a Righteousness that will answer its Case. Such Discourses as these we might have had, if Christ

had never come into the World; he might have excus'd himself that Trouble, if his Gospel was no more than mere Morality: but thus by defeating the End of one Crucifixion, they are guilty of bringing him under another; *Crucifying him afresh, and counting the Blood of the Covenant a common thing.* So the Leaders of the People cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroy'd. Thus again, Prayer is not the pouring out of our Supplications before the Lord, a showing before him all our Trouble; 'tis not a taking with us the Words that he puts into our Mouths; there needs no wrestling or pleading, and much less an Assistance of him who makes Intercession in us; tho the Apostle saith, *We know not what to pray for, or to do it, as we ought;* yet we have a Book to tell us the former, and no manner of care is had about the latter. And so, as to the delightful Ordinance of singing God's Praise, a gross Defilement is come upon that; and no wonder it is so much neglected, when People, instead of making Melody in their Hearts unto the Lord, have consign'd over the Duty to those that turn it all into vain Babbling. And the great Institution of all, which was design'd to be a Feast of Love, is a Handle of Strife: 'tis not consider'd as the highest Badg of a Profession, and an Argument to Holiness; they are excluded that would use it upon these Ends: but it is left open for those, who mean no more by it than a Qualification for an Office. Surely it is not meet to take the Children's Bread, and to cast it to Dogs. Is it any wonder that such Abominations as these leave a Hardness behind them? That Men grow stupid under a Ministry, where they never hear of Jesus? That they are unaffected with Prayers, where they never seek him? And that they are the worse for

for a Sacrament, where it is not their business to find him? And shall not such a Cause feel the Weight of his Indignation? it will be the Vengeance of the Lord, the Vengeance of his Temple. He hath told us of such an Appearance as is very needful in our day, when he'll be like a Refiner's Fire, and like Fuller's Soap, to purify the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold and Silver, ^{Mal.iii. 2, 3, 4} that they may offer unto the Lord an Offering in Righteousness; then shall the Offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the Days of old, as in the former Years.

5. They have injur'd the People of God, who are zealous for that Faith that was once deliver'd unto the Saints; the very Seriousness of these Persons is their Crime. We read of Noah, that by his preparing the Ark he condemn'd the World; and, no doubt on't, the World had before condemn'd him. 'Tis but the old Course for him that is born after the Flesh to persecute him that is born after the Spirit: Because ye are not of the World, but ^{Gal.iv. 29. Joh.xv. 15} I have chosen you out of it, therefore the World hates you. They have given them the Trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, yea moreover of Bonds and Imprisonments. I need not run into all the Particulars of human Rage against the People of God, and I wish that in giving the Proofs of it I had been oblig'd to look afar off; but I'll only represent this both as the Effect and the Cause of a Hardness of Heart upon those that are guilty. Whenever any Party come to this length, their Damnation slumbers not; God will not be slack to avenge his own Elect, tho he bears long with them. This was it that finish'd the Crime of the Jews, and open'd all the Sluices of Misery upon them, that they took pains to hinder the Gospel; they had kill'd the Lord Jesus and their own Prophets, they pleas'd not God, and

and were contrary to all Men: but the closing Wickedness was, that they forbid the Apostles to preach unto the Gentiles, that they might be sav'd; and so Wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

This Fury against Ministers, this Indignation at the Places of Worship, the Pleasure that's taken in abusing the one, and destroying the other; are Sins of that nature, that they cut deep into the Conscience. There are indeed Necessities upon the People of God to endure these Tribulations; they want to be looser from the World, and make a larger Disposition of their Hearts and Time to Religion; and therefore to give them a Concern for the Gospel, and a Zeal in it, both to warm and to distinguish their Piety, he leaves them in the hands of wicked Men: But tho they have deserv'd this from God, they may claim a better Usage from their Neighbours; they may say, that *the Lord is righteous, because they have rebell'd against him,* and still plead for equal Returns of Vengeance upon Enemies, that God would *spoil the Souls of those that have spoil'd them.* And thus he will do; he leaves them to go on in their Rage, and very often the more impotent it is, the more earnest, till they come down wonderfully, and there's no Comforter. Every Cry and Groan of an injur'd People is gone up into the Ears of the Lord God of Sabbaoth, *their Tears are in his Bottle, their Prayers are in his Book;* and he will argue with Judgment and Fury against those who thought they had a Licence from him to use in the worst manner the best Inhabitants of the Earth: the Rule of Justice is, *Come out of her, my People, lest ye be Partakers of her Plagues; reward her as she hath rewarded you; double unto her double, according to her Works; in the Cup which she hath fill'd, fill unto her double.*

Rev. xviii.

6.

They have discourag'd all practical Religion, and taken off from the Minds of Men the awful Impressions of Eternity. One of the most familiar Distinctions between Good and Bad us'd to be this, that the *one swore*, and the other *swear'd an Oath*; but there are ways found out to defile and cheapen that Solemnity, as if the Name of God might be us'd in jest; as if the Imprecations of future Vengeance, and a Disclaim of the Joys in Heaven, had no meaning in them. Now whenever this grows into an Opinion, either that Party must fall, or the World must; 'tis impossible that Societies should subsist, or Men be any more to one another than wild Beasts in the Forest, if we destroy the grand Security of mutual Confidence. 'Tis with an Avowance of this very Principle, that we were attack'd in the late Rebellion: Men had ingag'd to one another over their Bottles of Wine, and those Promises were to raze out what they had own'd before a Court of Justice, or at the Table of the Lord. Perhaps in the former Case, there was a dry Wish of Damnation upon themselves, if they did not fulfil their Word; but in the latter there's *an eating and drinking that Damnation*: the *Curse* hath already enter'd into *their Bowels*, and gone like Oil into their Bones. A Man shall be suppos'd to have no Honour, if he neglects a rash Promise in a drunken Frolick; but his Reputation is untouch'd for Honesty, Conscience, and Adherence to the Church, tho he takes an Oath which he resolves to break, and seals it with a *Sacrament*: as if it was not enough to profane the Name of God before the Magistrate, unless he did it at his very Table. But as the Apostle tells us, *the Law is made for* 1 Tim. i. *Lyars and perjur'd Persons, and if there be any* 10. *thing contrary to sound Doctrine*; and God himself

Isa. lxy.
15, 16.

self hath threaten'd, that he will be a Witness against all false Swearers. We read of some who prepare a Table for that Troop, and furnish a Drink-Offering unto that Number. They were solliciting an Invasion, bringing in a Foreign Force upon Israel, and perhaps did it with the highest Pretences of Love to the Temple; but that Prevarication was so odious, that God threatens to leave their Name for a Curse unto his Chosen, that he would slay them, and call his People by another Name; that he who blessed himself in the Earth, should bless himself in the God of Truth.

7. As all this is done under a Profession of Zeal for the Church, so it makes the Name of God to be contemptible. Can Mankind be persuaded that those Persons believe another World, who break (not the least, but) the greatest of these Commandments, and teach Men so? And is it not like to leave a Hardness upon the Hearts of People? They that behold such an Usage of Sacred Things, will either have an Abhorrence of these Teachers, and perhaps, for their sakes, of all Religion; or otherways they'll think there's a Holiness, a Church-Membership, consistent with Fraud, and Riot, and Cruelty; that they may swear, kill, and deceive, and come into God's House, and say we are deliver'd to do all these Abominations: and is such a Cause as this like to prevail? Tho' they plainly declare, that to them Religion is only a Name; yet will the Great God, who hath founded it in the Blood, and rais'd it up with the Empire of his Son, let that pass for a Truth? No, the Mouth of all Liars shall be stop'd, Judgment shall begin at the House of God; and what will the End of all those be that obey not the Gospel?

That

That which hinder'd this Prophecy from having its full Accomplishment upon the Jews, was their Conversation with the People of the Lands, and by that means they were often brought into Bondage to them ; they prov'd *Thorns in their Sides, and Pricks in their Eyes.* When Israel took *Psal. cvii.* of the accursed thing, they turn'd their Backs 34—40 upon their Enemies, they did not destroy the Nations concerning whom the Lord commanded them ; but were mingled among the Heathen, and learnt their Works, and serv'd their Idols, which prov'd a Snare unto them. Thus were they defil'd with their own Works, and went a whoring after their own Inventions ; therefore was the Wrath of God kindled against his People, insomuch that he abhor'd his own Inheritance. And so it hath been with us ever since the Reformation ; the Pretence was, that easy Methods would bring a certain Party in, but to *their Influence* we must ascribe all the Wars that ever rag'd in this Island. That there is now a greater Infatuation than ever, I do not at all question ; but it should send us into our Families and Closets, to see what there is on our part that hath provok'd God to give us up into the hands of a foolish People : and if their Blasphemy may be a Whet to our Supplications, if their Rage may fasten the Bonds of mutual Love, if *they that fear the Lord* would be more with him, and *speak oftner one with another* ; we might think, that as the Extremity of Profaneness makes some People ripe for Desolation, so this better Temper would show us to be fit for Mercy.

Let us therefore plead with God those Arguments that we shall be supply'd with from a Concern to his Glory ; for *he will take Pleasure in his People, and beautify the Meek with Salvation.* Tho there's Danger enough to keep your Fears
G awake,

awake, yet remember the mighty Acts of the Lord. When Joshua call'd the Captains of War, to put their Feet upon the Necks of the five Kings, it was not to insult so many crown'd Heads, but to incourage their Faith for the time to come: *Fear not, nor be dismay'd, be strong and of a good Courage, for thus shall the Lord do to all your Enemies against whom you fight.*

I'll conclude the whole Discourie with the words of the Prophet; Say ye not, a Confederacy, to all to whom this People say, a Confederacy; neither fear ye their Fear, nor be afraid: For many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and snar'd, and taken. They shall pass thro the Land hardly bestead and hungry, and it shall come to pass, when they be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their King and their God, and look upwards; and they shall look to the Earth, and behold Trouble and Darknes, and they shall be driven into Darknes. For God will break the Yoke of his Burden, the Staff of his Shoulder, and the Rod of the Oppressor, as in the days of Midian.

Isa. viii. 12,
13, 15.

—ix. 4.

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